Salient Points

- Torrential rain and river overflow in the capital city of Honiara, Guadalcanal, Malaita and Isabel Provinces caused massive flooding, damages and displacement between 3-5 April 2014
- Entire residential and business communities destroyed in Honiara search and recovery still ongoing for missing persons
- 9,022 people are living in 24 evacuation centres in Honiara. Some relief is reaching them but the water and sanitation situation is deteriorating and morbidity is increasing
- In all Provinces, large areas of subsistence and commercial farmland are covered in mud and water with serious damage to crops and livelihoods as dangerous shortages of clean water; little access to sanitation facilities
- Three destroyed or damaged bridges and flooding are still limiting mobility and access, but rapid assessments in most sectors have been carried out
- Government, bilateral donors, UN and NGOs providing first response, with some key gaps remaining and secondary impact emerging such as increase in diarrhea cases
- City water authority system has been damaged, as well as household, school and other borehole, surface and rainwater catchment systems damaged or destroyed.
- Main immediate needs identified as evacuation site management; food, clean water and sanitation, hygiene supplies, health care (esp. diarrhea, dengue, respiratory, eye and skin infections), protection of vulnerable people.
- Other needs identified include blankets, clothing, micro-nutrient powder sachets, zinc, fuel and cooking utensils; school restoration to minimize delay in resumption of classes.

Solomon Islands
Humanitarian Situation Report 3

Solomon Islands
Flooding

52,000 People affected
of which 24,410 are children

9,022 People in capital city of Honiara in 24 evacuation centres

41 Schools affected
Source: SIG National Emergency Operations Centre 8 Apr 2014 @2100

UNICEF Needs*
US$ 400,000
*subject to revision after assessments complete
Rapid assessment of formal and informal evacuation centres in Honiara show that more than 9,000 people living in them are in urgent need of water, sanitation facilities and hygiene supplies. The reticulated water supply by Solomon Water is partly restored and estimated at still only 40% of their usual delivery capacity and the quality of water supplied is a continued concern. Detailed WASH assessments have not yet been done on damage and needs outside the evacuation centres in Honiara and other areas of Guadalcanal. A total of up to 40,000 may be affected in Guadalcanal Province, there are 15 make shift camps and access remains a challenge due to no to poor roads and damaged bridges and boats are required to reach many parts of the province. The displaced persons are mainly from the poorest parts of Honiara, areas that were deficient in clean water and sanitation even before the flooding. UNICEF Solomon Islands is designated by the Government as their Supporting Agency for the coordination of the WASH Sub-Cluster under the IDP and Social Welfare Cluster. Solomon Water and the Fire service as well as some NGOs/FBOs have been delivering and purifying water, but their capacity is overstretched; e.g. the assessment showed ten evacuation centres with no water supply. Obvious open defecation was observed at nine sites and there is likely to be even wider spread open defecation. People at all sites require soap and other basic hygiene items, especially adolescent girls and women. Surge deployment from the Pacific Humanitarian Team includes a WASH specialist (UNICEF). UNICEF has made available its contingency supplies in Honiara existing of water containers, purification tablets, soap and hygiene messages and additional supplies will be shipped from Vanuatu as soon as possible.

UNICEF Solomon Islands is designated to support Government with coordination of the Education Cluster; the education rapid assessment is ongoing. Preliminary information is that at least twelve schools are being used as evacuation centers (WASH assessment 6 April); although the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) believes the number may be higher. At least 23 more schools are damaged (preliminary results, education assessment 7 April). Most school children are on holidays but they will be challenged to resume classes on 14 April, unless displaced people can find somewhere else to go and clean up can be done. SIG is engaging contractors to do assessments and until these are done, schools remain closed. A major concern aside from building damage, is school water and sanitation damages, as well as losses of school equipment, furniture and learning materials. Save the Children among others, is assisting MEHRD to find water solutions. UNICEF has supplied 3 x 80m2 tents and 20 tarpaulins to Honiara City Council via the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD), and will supply up to 40 more which could be used for protective learning and community emergency services (PLACES). Other pre-positioned supplies include tarpaulins, school in a box, and ECD kits. An additional education specialist will be deployed from Fiji by 12th April.

Disease surveillance and reporting indicate an increase in diarrhea, acute respiratory infection and conjunctivitis. Dengue fever is also a high risk. WHO and UNICEF are sharing an advisory to humanitarian partners against distribution of infant formula and encouraging the promotion of breastfeeding, as well as other health messages. There will likely be a need to do a special immunization campaign against measles. WHO has deployed staff from Fiji and Manila, and bilateral and NGO surge staff have also arrived in Honiara from Australia. Staff is expected later this week from UNFPA in Fiji. Two emergency health kits and oral rehydration salts from UNICEF have been delivered. The Good Samaritan and National Referral Hospital are operating, as well as some clinics and mobile health services; however some clinics are damaged and closed. Many other supplies, including mosquito nets, are available in the National Medical Stores, however identified gaps include micronutrient powder and zinc. The Government and some NGO and other groups have done some food
or meal distribution, along with cooking fuel, but supplies and personnel are insufficient to meet needs.

Protection is under the Welfare and IDP Cluster. Government entities are carrying out search and rescue missions; Red Cross and other partners have carried out registration at evacuation centres and updates/verifications are planned. An evacuation centre management plan was drafted. Government employees from various sectors have been deployed to manage security; some cleaning; and provide mobile health services, however trained evacuation centre management remains a major gap. While displaced persons have left a few of the sites, thousands remain. Different units of the SIG police are carrying out search and rescue efforts, including to recover bodies; assessments in east Guadalcanal; and threat/risk assessments at evacuation centres. Australian, NZ and Pacific Police personnel are assisting as part of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Island (RAMSI). World Vision, UNICEF and other partners, in collaboration with Education Cluster, have begun to organise safe/protective spaces or PLACES for children. Three staff on surge deployment from the Pacific Humanitarian Team includes child protection (UNICEF), gender-based violence/reproductive/maternal health (UNFPA) and gender (UN Women). UNICEF has given several tents to the Honiara City Council.

Other Cluster news: The Government of Australia has deployed two engineers to help with bridge reconstruction, while two WFP logisticians are en route. UNDP is planning early recovery assistance to the SIG, through the Australian Government-funded Pacific Risk Resilience Programme. There are significant needs for shelter, food security and agriculture and other livelihood recovery.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Three days of heavy rains from 3-5 April, on top of a long rainy season, caused rivers to overflow, flash flooding, bridges to be destroyed or damaged and entire city neighborhoods and rural farmland to be destroyed. Logistics remain a serious challenge, with limited mobility and access between sectors of Honiara and into and out of the city to other areas in Guadalcanal. The airport was closed for three days but re-opened on the 6th. The Port is open and functioning for ships and boats.

Honiara City and Guadalcanal Province appear to have experienced the worst damage, with damage to food gardens, plantations and water sources also reported from Malaita and Isabel Provinces. Guadalcanal Province (population: 93,613, estimated affected: 52,000, including in the capital city of Honiara (population: 64,609). The estimated 12,000 people initially displaced has been reduced to 9,022 (SI NEOC 7 April 2014, 1730 hours). The NEOC report from 7 April also shows 25 evacuation centres in Honiara still hosting displaced persons, with four centres no longer occupied. Plans are being made to update and verify the initial registration. Numbers per centre vary from 15 to 2,028. No incidences of children separated from families have been reported thus far, although children are among the dead.

Preliminary results of rapid assessments led by SIG with support from Cluster members, including UNICEF, have shown the following as immediate and important needs:

Clean water and sanitation, hygiene supplies at evacuation centres, for returnees and at schools;
Health care (esp. for diarrhea, respiratory infection, dengue and unidentified fever, eye and skin infections, parasites, micro-nutrient deficiencies, pregnant women and obstetric and newborn care),
Protection of vulnerable people. Other needs identified include evacuation site management; blankets, clothing, fuel and cooking utensils; school restoration, including damages to buildings, water and sanitation and losses of furnishings and learning material.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination
The Solomon Islands National Emergency Operations Center is active 24/7 and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) is leading the response, coordinating all Ministries and other Government entities designated as Cluster Leads. NDMO has activated all Solomon Islands Humanitarian Clusters and Government Cluster and other sector leaders are being assisted by bilateral and multilateral partners (UN and SPC) and many NGOs and FBOs.

Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF is supporting the emergency response through its office in Solomon Islands, with technical oversight, surge staff, resource mobilisation, procurement, shipping, contracts and financial services from UNICEF Pacific's multi country office in Suva, Fiji. UNICEF is the lead support to the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) led clusters for WASH and Education. UNICEF supports SIG and WHO for Health and Nutrition and SIG for IDPs and Protection. Our strategy is:

1) Coordinate all implementation resources and work through NDMO, supported by UN OCHA and within agreed SIG disaster coordination and Ministry mechanisms. Fulfil commitments for lead technical advice to SIG on coordination of WASH and Education; provide supplementary support in Protection, Health and Nutrition clusters or working groups.

2) Implement response through four mechanisms: (i) release of contingency supplies pre-positioned in Honiara and Port Vila to partner best able to distribute in coordinated, effective way; (ii) procurement and shipping of additional supplies; (iii) mixed modality of cash advances to government, NGOs and payments to contractors; (iv) technical assistance through staff on ground and deployed surge staff, with remote support from UNICEF Fiji.

3) Prioritise needs for clean water, sanitation and hygiene in evacuation centres, and in schools that sustained damages

4) Integration of support to protective and learning services in evacuation centres

5) Integration of WASH and education and protection in support to resumption of regular schooling

6) Supplement supplies and services of SIG and other health partners, with concentration on nutrition supplies

7) Coordinate with the Solomon Islands National Emergency Operations Centre [NEOC], Solomon Island Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) to ensure massive and repetitive promotion on national radio of key family practices for emergencies that keep family members healthy and safe. These messages are a sub-set of agreed Pacific Humanitarian Team messages, and also agreed with relevant SIG Ministries. The promoted practices and messages match UNICEF’s core commitments to children in humanitarian situations, and have also been packaged as pocket guides which have been pre-positioned in Honiara. We are working with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) to ensure their distribution to evacuation centres and other areas where most affected families are located.

8) Financial accountability for all resources and accountability through on site monitoring for performance on targets agreed with NDMO, and other involved SIG partners and humanitarian actors.

Human resources

UNICEF staff members in Honiara, Solomon Islands include the following areas: Chief of Field Office, child protection (2), education (1), immunization/logistics (1), maternal and child health (1), communication (1), administration (3). An additional WASH staff will join the office shortly. Surge staff have been deployed in WASH (1), child protection (1), and communication (1). Surge staff in education (1) and emergency coordination (1) will arrive on 12th April. Surge staff for maternal and child health is being sought. The UNICEF office is also administratively supporting 2 logistics specialists deployed by WFP.

Funding

UNICEF Pacific has estimated it will require USD 400,000 to respond in water, sanitation, hygiene, maternal and child health, protection and education areas. UNICEF Pacific currently has USD 70,000 available from its Emergency Programme Revolving Fund, which will need to be replenished. UNICEF New Zealand has launched a donation appeal but support from other donors will be needed.
Reporting period: 7-9 April 2014

Next SitRep: 14 April 2014

UNICEF spokespersons in the Solomon Islands

Kang Yun Jong (Chief): yjkang@unicef.org OR yjkang.unicef@gmail.com
Mobile tel: 677 749 6172

Vika Waradi (Communications): vwaradi@unicef.org

Donald Burgess (Water, sanitation, hygiene) email dburgess@unicef.org OR dburgess.unicef@gmail.com
Mobile tel: 677 764 0264

Anika Kingmele (Child protection) email akingemele@unicef.org OR akingmele.unicef@gmail.com
Mobile tel: 677 742 4303

For further information, please contact

Karen Allen
Representative
UNICEF Pacific
Tel: +679 9925 427
Email: kallen@unicef.org

Isabelle Austin
Deputy Representative
UNICEF Pacific
Tel: +679 9925 613
Email: iaustin@unicef.org

Tomas Jensen
Communication Specialist
UNICEF Pacific
Tel: +679 9925 606
Email: tjensen@unicef.org